



36th Annual Report

URBAN LEAGUE OF ESSEX COUNTY
1947 through 1952



OUR CREDO

we believe *that the Urban League represents a practical application of the principle that Equal Opportunity is an inherent right of every American citizen.*

we believe *that by improving neighborhood and working conditions for minorities throughout the United States, the Urban League is helping to develop higher community standards and greater opportunities for all of the American people.*

we believe *that the special situation of a minority cannot be appraised without regard to the whole community situation of which it is a part; therefore, we believe that no appraisal or plans for the total community can be valid without consideration of the needs of the minority.*

we believe *that the concept of Equal Opportunity includes unrestricted opportunity for sound family life and adequate housing, personal growth and training of the individual and his employment on the basis of merit.*

we believe *that members of the Urban League are bound to do all possible to advance the objectives of the organization in their community, their state and their nation.*

we believe *also, that members of the Urban League, as individuals, are pledged to set an example of Justice and Fair Play in their personal lives. They should exert their personal influence, at work and at leisure, to make Equality of Opportunity not merely a promise, but an actual fact in the life of every American."*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE



The Urban League headquarters building

foreword

This report summarizes the activities of the Urban League of Essex County during the past six years. Budget limitations have made it impossible for us to publish annual reports recently. Therefore, we are especially grateful to the Urban League Guild for helping us to provide you with this printed account of our activities.

The day-to-day, and sometimes the year-to-year, advances in race relations are often discouraging. But a review of the gains and losses over a period of several years is heartening. The work of the Urban League movement is constant, usually without fanfare. But like little grains of sand, each small accomplishment adds to the great weight which is tipping the scales more and more in favor of Equal Economic Opportunity.

The Urban League welcomes your continued support in this important task of making practical application of democracy to all our citizens.

A. A. Phillips,
President



The Urban League is an inter-racial community welfare organization which advocates teamwork among all citizens as a basis for solving community problems. It is concerned primarily with the colored citizen, how he fits into all phases of community life and how he is accepted by members of the majority group. Civic responsibility on the part of all residents is emphasized in the League's approach to racial matters.

teamwork

growth

The rapid growth of the Negro population in Newark and in the suburbs has placed added responsibilities on civic and welfare agencies, for housing restrictions have confined Negroes generally to the same areas they occupied before the war. Between 1940 and 1950 Newark's Negro population increased from 46,226 to 75,626 or 64%. It represented 11% of the total in 1940 and 17% in 1950. For Essex County the increase was from 68,776 to 104,306 (52%).

These restrictions in housing facilities are pointedly demonstrated in Newark's Third Ward, which registered the largest population growth of any ward in the city, in spite of the fact that no new housing construction occurred there during the last decade.

Although significant gains have been made toward the accommodation of colored citizens in the field of public housing, with few exceptions none have been made in the field of private housing. Certainly this offers a severe challenge, not only to the Urban League but also to the community at large. Private industry especially can ill afford to shirk its responsibility here. The Urban League offers its support and services to forward looking leaders of the housing industry who are willing to explore the vast market created by the backlog of demand among Negroes for decent homes.

jobs

Great strides have been made in employment opportunities of Negroes. In 1946 we reported making the first placements of operators and clerical workers in the telephone industry and the first placements of colored bus drivers and department store sales clerks. These areas have expanded and other opportunities have been developed in professional, technical, skilled, semi-skilled, sales and clerical positions.

Two factors have been paramount in bringing these conditions about: (1) the great demand for various types of workers occasioned by our semi-war economy and defense program and (2) effective fair employment legislation on a state-wide level. These factors have paved the way for many successful sessions of negotiation with employers and labor groups, resulting in 41 "pilot" placements and the up-grading of hundreds of colored workers during the period. These pilot placements were "firsts" which opened the doors for others to follow.



Burring Operation (grinding)

Among the 1,718 placements made were many in the following categories: engineer (electrical, electronics, mechanical, chemical), accountant, draftsman, machinist, radio technician, sales clerk, stenographer, salesman (stocks, brewery, auto, advertising, appliance), cartoonist, private detective, chemist, personnel director, teacher (school, nursery) social worker, chemist, dietician, business machine operator, bank clerk.

Because of the great demand for labor and the increased acceptance of minority group workers, the League has placed greater emphasis on guidance and training during the past few years. Counselling with 635 individuals and with 89 groups on vocational and educational matters shows the extent to which we have affected the future lives of youth. In this work we have obtained the valuable cooperation of the Newark Board of Education, the Public Library, Essex County Department of Education and the school officials and personnel in several of the suburban towns. The press, and the radio and television stations in the area have also cooperated splendidly, enabling us to reach a wide audience of both parents and children. The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the State Employment Service, and the YMCA and YWCA have also given us significant support and cooperation.



The essence of civic responsibility is good neighborliness, which is exemplified in the activities of the League's Neighborhood Groups. In 1950, for instance, members of these units provided home makers aid service to 57 families. Volunteer women from the groups went into homes where emergency situations had developed because of the illness or absence of the mother. Children were fed, dressed, gotten off to school; groceries were bought; sick parents cared for. Thus, the family was kept going until the mother could resume her duties.

good-neighbors

Through these neighborhood units, the League carries on its health education and better home management programs. Problems of child care, nutrition, family budgeting, home-school relationships are dealt with in private home consultations and in group discussions.

In cooperation with the Essex County TB Association and public schools annual chest X-ray testing programs and Health Fairs are conducted. Nearly 10,000



X-ray Testing

individual X-ray tests were given during the 6 year period. Where necessary, cases were followed up for treatment by private physicians.

Although no casework service is rendered, the League is a good neighbor to hundreds of bewildered individuals seeking guidance on matters involving: housing, home evictions, relief, school difficulties, marital discord, camping, burned-out homes. When the client needs additional help, arrangement is made with the proper agency. In the period covered by this report 2,765 families came to the League with welfare problems and were aided and 1,462 home visits were made to assist clients.

housing

The Emergency Committee on Fire Hazards was organized by the League in 1947. This group spearheaded a drive for enforcement of city health and sanitary codes, provision of better emergency care for fire victims and greater fire-prevention measures. Later, the League joined other groups in concerted action which led to the formation of the Newark Citizens' Housing Committee.

In 1946 and 1947 the League endeavored to get the Newark Housing Authority to abandon its bi-racial occupancy policy. Later it supported the successful efforts of the Essex County Inter-Group Council (of which the League is a charter member) which brought about the execution of a firm policy of racial integration by the Authority.

In the legislative field the League supported state legislation abolishing discrimination in public and publicly-assisted housing programs. It urgently supported both state and federal programs for low-cost public housing, slum clearance and urban redevelopment. At public hearings the League stressed the need for greater stimulation to private construction and for measures to safeguard the interests and rights of minority groups.

Information submitted to FHA by the League led to FHA approval of a builder's plans to construct an apartment in Newark open to Negro occupancy.

Federal and state rent control measures were supported

by the League and the New Jersey Tenants' Council was organized to protect tenants against unscrupulous landlords. The Council was recognized by the Office of the Housing Expediter as official spokesman for tenants in the area.

The League joined forces with other groups in support of a strong civil rights plank in the new State Constitution. Through the Joint Council for Civil Rights, it also supported the Freeman Civil Rights Bill which broadened the jurisdiction of the State Division Against Discrimination. The League urged municipalities throughout the county to appoint Civil Rights Commissions authorized by the legislation.

civil rights

In order to have Negroes appointed to the Newark Fire Department and to have more Negroes appointed to the Police Force, the League set up a police and fireman training course in cooperation with the Court Street YMCA in 1947. Several of the trainees passed the Civil Service test and were appointed to the police force. This served to stimulate more Negroes to take subsequent tests and qualify for appointment.

In 1952 the League collaborated in the movement to have a Negro appointed as a municipal judge. Although this effort failed in its original intent, it helped to bring about the appointment of a Negro as Assistant Corporation Counsel.

In matters of police brutality complaints and racial tension incidents the League is working with the Police Department, Board of Education, Essex County Inter-Group Council, Joint Council for Civil Rights, Newark Branch of the NAACP and the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations.

In spite of gains made in recent years, Negroes still are employed largely in the low-paying industries and in jobs hazardous to health. The State Council of Urban Leagues, therefore, has supported measures to establish a strong Minimum Wage law and to broaden Workmen's Compensation to cover all occupational diseases. Problems of the migrant farm laborer also are given attention by the League. The New Jersey Consumers' League has pioneered in these fields and has provided valuable leadership in the fight to

labor legislation

improve conditions; the Urban League is greatly indebted to it. The CIO and AF of L labor groups have also contributed greatly in these areas.

guild

In the front of this report is a photograph of the League's headquarters building which is admirably suited to the needs of our agency. The Urban League Guild is responsible for our having it. The Guild organized and conducted the Building Fund Campaign which raised \$20,000. This money together with the proceeds of the sale of the building on West Market Street was used to purchase, renovate and partially equip the present structure.

The Guild is the membership organization of the Urban League. Contributors to the League form its membership. Periodic meetings are scheduled taking the form of lectures, discussions, film showings, plays, exhibits. The Walter White lecture, Richmond Barthe art exhibit, "Simple Speaks His Mind" play and "Cry The Beloved Country" film were the outstanding programs in recent years. Annually, the Guild makes a contribution to the National Urban League in payment of our local agency dues.

The Urban League is indebted to the Guild not only for its tangible contributions but also for the inspiration which comes from its exemplification of American Teamwork In Action.



Vocation Guidance Panel

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

1947 through 1952

YEARLY TOTALS

9,909	Job Applicant Interviews
3,813	Job Referrals
1,718	Job Placements
1,001	Business and Industrial Firms Served
635	Individuals Given Vocational Guidance and Counseling
89	Groups Given Vocation and Education Guidance
41	Pilot or unusual Placements
2,765	Families or Family heads aided on Welfare Problems
1,462	Home Visits to Families for Budget Consultation & other aid
3,436	Neighborhood and Civic Meetings and Conferences attended
431	Speeches Delivered to Community Groups
9,693	Individuals given X-Ray Tests, in cooperation with the Essex County TB Association

The statistics above relate only to staff activities and do not include the many hours of effort and the great contributions in other ways of Board and committee members. These unpaid members of the Urban League are the ones whose efforts make the League a real Community Agency. Together with hundreds of other "Urban Leaguers" throughout the country, they form the back-bone of the Urban League Movement.

*George H. Robinson,
Executive Secretary*

URBAN LEAGUE OF ESSEX COUNTY
 (Formerly N.J. Urban League)
 58 Jones Street Newark 3, N. J.

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IN MEMORIAM
 WALTER G. ALEXANDER, M.D.
 A FOUNDER and MEMBER of the BOARD of DIRECTORS
 1917 - 1953

The art work for the cover of this report was a generous contribution of the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Art through its Director, Henry Gasser, and its faculty member, Robert Hedderd. The League is indebted to Mr. Gasser, Mr. Hedderd and the school for this valuable service.

20th Annual Report

URBAN LEAGUE OF ESSEX COUNTY

1917-1918

